

CLAIMS

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A system for delivering a composite information stream over a computer network, comprising:
 - a media delivery device having a media device driver associated therewith;
 - a flow control system being independent of and communicating with said media delivery device and with a stored data source, wherein said flow control system is configured to receive data from said media delivery device and from said stored data source, and to control the flow of said media delivery device data and said stored data source; and
 - an encoder communicating with said flow control system to receive said controlled data flow.
2. A system as claimed in claim 1 further comprising:
 - an Internet media player which receives said data from said encoder and displays said data on a video monitor using an Internet browser;
 - a data classifier which associates identifiers with said data;
 - an identifier recorder which records the passage of a designated type of data to said Internet media player; and
 - an identifier collector which enters a plurality of said recorded passages into a common data file.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said designated type of data is a commercial advertisement, and said common data file is an advertising log.
4. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said media delivery device provides live data.
5. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said media delivery device provides a television broadcast.
6. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said stored data is downloaded from a web server and stored on a computer linked to said encoder.

7. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said stored data includes commercial advertisements.

8. A system as claimed in claim 7 wherein said flow control system allows a user to obtain information about content displayed in said commercial advertisements.

9. A system as claimed in claim 8 wherein said flow control system allows a user to order products or services that are associated with said content.

10. A system as claimed in claim 7 wherein said flow control system provides updated information about said media delivery device data.

11. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said stored data is located in an audio video interleaved file or a graphics interchange formatted file.

12. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said flow control system is located in an electronic unit that is physically separate from said media delivery device.

13. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said flow control system is a software module, and further comprising a data control manager software module for passing control instructions to said flow control system.

14. A system as claimed in claim 13, further comprising a queue coupled to said flow control system for passing information related to a desired order of data delivery from said stored data source.

15. A system as claimed in claim 13 wherein said data control manager passes said control instructions via the Internet.

16. A system as claimed in claim 14 wherein said queue is remotely alterable.

17. A system as claimed in claim 16 wherein said queue is altered by transferring information over a computer network.

18. A system as claimed in claim 17 wherein said queue is altered by downloading information from the Internet.

19. A system as claimed in claim 16 wherein said queue is altered by pressing buttons on a telephone key pad.

20. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said flow control system monitors said media delivery device data for a control signal, and wherein said flow control system signals said data control manager of receipt of said control signal, and wherein said data control manager controls said flow control manager in response to said control signal.

21. A system as claimed in claim 20 wherein said control signal is an elapsed time.

22. A system as claimed in claim 20 wherein said control signal is embedded in said media delivery device data.

23. A system as claimed in claim 22 wherein said control signal is an audible tone.

24. A system as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a software log of events, said software log being created in response to said controlled data flow, said software log containing a record of the data passed to said encoder from said stored data source by said flow controller.

25. A system as claimed in claim 24 wherein said software log is transferable over the Internet.

26. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said media delivery device data is a television broadcast.

27. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said stored data is an advertisement.

28. A system as claimed in claim 14 wherein said queue is an advertisement queue.

29. A system as claimed in claim 24 wherein said software log is an advertising log.

30. A system for delivering a composite information stream over a computer network, comprising:

a plurality of data sources; and

a flow control system configured to:

receive data from two or more of said plurality of data sources and from a data control manager,

to selectively control the flow of data received from said plurality of data sources in response to commands from said data control manager, and

to pass said controlled data flow to an encoder as a composite information stream.

31. A system as claimed in claim 30 further comprising:

a media player communicating with said encoder to receive said composite information stream from said encoder;

a data classifier which associates identifiers with said data;

an identifier recorder which records the passage of a designated type of data to said media player; and

an identifier collector which enters a plurality of said recorded passages into a common data file.

32. A method as claimed in claim 31 wherein said designated type of identifier identifies a commercial advertisement, and said common data file is an advertising log.

33. A system as claimed in claim 30 wherein at least one of said plurality of data sources is a live data source and at least one of said data sources is a stored data source, and wherein said flow control system is configured to communicate with a data control manager to selectively pass, in response to commands from said data control manager, data from at least one of said live data sources and from one or more of said at least one stored data sources.

34. A system as claimed in claim 33 further comprising an encoder configured to receive said selectively pass data to transform said received data into a composite data stream.

35. A system as claimed in claim 33 wherein said flow control system includes an electronic queue.

36. A system as claimed in claim 33 wherein said stored data is downloaded from a web server and stored on a computer linked to said encoder.

37. A system as claimed in claim 30 wherein said flow control system includes an electronic queue.

38. A system as claimed in claim 30 wherein at least one of said plurality of data sources provides live data.

39. A system as claimed in claim 38 wherein at least one of said plurality of said data sources includes a video feed.

40. A system as claimed in claim 39 wherein said video feed is a television broadcast.

41. A system as claimed in claim 30 wherein at least one of said plurality of data sources provides stored data.

42. A system as claimed in claim 41 wherein said stored data includes commercial advertisements.

43. A system as claimed in claim 41 wherein said stored data is located in an audio video interleaved file, a graphics interchange formatted file, is located in a file that has been compressed according to joint photographic experts group standards, or is located in a file that has been compressed according to motion picture experts group standards.

44. A system as claimed in claim 41 wherein said stored data is downloaded from a web server and stored on a computer linked to said encoder.

45. A system as claimed in claim 44 wherein said stored data includes commercial advertisements.

46. A system for delivering a composite information stream to an output device, comprising:

a plurality of data sources;

a flow control system which receives data from one or more of said plurality of data sources and selectively passes data from one or more of said plurality of data sources to an encoder; and

a media player which receives said data from said encoder and delivers said data to a video display.

47. A method of delivering a composite information stream over a computer network, comprising:

obtaining data from a plurality of data sources;

receiving control signals from a flow control system interposed between said plurality of data sources and an encoder;

selectively passing data from one or more of said plurality of data sources to said encoder in response to said received control signals;

delivering said selectively passed data to said encoder;

transforming said selectively passed data into a composite data stream; and

delivering said composite data stream to a media player.

48. A method as claimed in claim 47 wherein selectively passing further comprises;

designating an order of transmission of data from two or more of said plurality of data sources;

inserting said data into an information stream in said designated order; and

passing said information stream to said encoder.

49. A method as claimed in claim 47 wherein obtaining said data further comprises:

placing a plurality of data identifiers in an order in accordance with said designated transmission order; and

transferring names of data sets that are associated with said data identifiers to said flow control system in said data identifier order.

50. A method as claimed in claim 49 wherein selectively passing further comprises:

loading a named data set into an encoder; and
transmitting said named data set to a media player.

51. A method as claimed in claim 49 further comprising passing said data identifiers to said flow controller in said data identifier order.

52. A system as claimed in claim 51 further comprising:
recording the passage of an identifier associated with a designated type of named data set to said Internet media player; and
entering a plurality of said recorded passages in a common data file.

53. A method as claimed in claim 52 wherein said designated type of identifier is a commercial advertisement, and said common data file is an advertising log.

54. A method as claimed in claim 47 wherein at least one of said plurality of data sources provides live data.

55. A method as claimed in claim 54 wherein said live data source is a video feed.

56. A method as claimed in claim 55 wherein said video feed is a television broadcast.

57. A method as claimed in claim 47 wherein at least one of said plurality of data sources provides stored data.

58. A method as claimed in claim 57 wherein said stored data resides in an audio video interleaved file, a graphics interchange formatted file, a file that has been compressed according to joint photographic experts group standards or a file that has been compressed according to motion picture expert group standards.

59. A method of delivering a composite information stream over a computer network, comprising:

capturing a first data set;

receiving a request for transmission of at least a second data set;

designating an order of transmission of said first and at least said second data sets;
and

controlling the flow of data from said first data set and at least said second data set in accordance with said designated order.

60. A method as claimed in claim 59 further comprising:
delivering said controlled flow to a media player;
associating identifiers with said data;
recording the passage of a designated type of identifier to said media player; and
entering a plurality of said recorded passages in a common data file.

61. A method as claimed in claim 60 wherein said designated type of identifier is a commercial advertisement, and said common data file is an advertising log.

62. A method as claimed in claim 59 wherein said output device is a video monitor.

63. A method as claimed in claim 59 wherein said output device is a personal digital assistant.

64. A method as claimed in claim 59 wherein said order designating step further comprises retrieving a predetermined data transmission order from an electronic queue.

65. A method as claimed in claim 59 wherein at least one of said data sets includes live data.

66. A method as claimed in claim 65 wherein a source of said live data is a video feed.

67. A method as claimed in claim 66 wherein said video feed is a television broadcast.

68. A method as claimed in claim 59 wherein at least one of said data sets delivers stored data.

69. A method as claimed in claim 68 wherein said stored data is in an audio video interleaved file, a graphics interchange formatted file, a file that has been compressed according to joint photographic experts group standards or a file that has been compressed according to motion picture experts group standards.